

Review of Lepidoptera (Butterfly and Moth) Sightings 2023



January

The first half of the month was dominated by a series of deep Atlantic depressions and transient ridges of high pressure with winds mostly from a south-westerly direction, which led to mild but rather unsettled conditions. It became cooler and drier from mid-month as winds turned northerly and remained so as high pressure became established during the last week.

There was a quiet start to the year with just one migrant moth recorded in January: a Silver Y at Hythe on the 24th.

The only adult micro moth species noted in the month was *Emmelina monodactyla* (Common Plume) with one at Cheriton on the 4th, but tenanted leaf-mines of *Phyllonorycter leucographella* (Firethorn Leaf Miner) and *Cosmopterix pulchrimella* (Pellitory Cosmet) were located at Hythe on the 7th.

There were three further additions to the macro moth year list: Bloxworth Snout at Hythe on the 1st, and Mottled Umber and Winter Moth at Seabrook on the 2nd.

February

February was notably dry, with high pressure influencing the weather for much of the time. It was unsettled initially, and again for a time from mid-month, but overall was provisionally the driest February nationally since 1993. Temperatures were close to the average, with a milder spell around mid-month.

Highlights in February included the earliest ever area records of Hummingbird Hawk-moth at Seabrook on the 15th, Pearly Underwing at Hythe on the 18th and Pretty Chalk Carpet at Folkestone Warren on the 21st.

There were seven additions to the micro moth year list, including *Acleris cristana* (Tufted Button) at Seabrook on the 12th, *Agonopterix alstromeriana* (Brown-spot Flat-body) there on the 17th and *Tortricodes alternella* (Winter Shade) there on the 25th.

A further ten species were added to the macro moth year list, including Spring Usher and Dark Chestnut at Cheriton on the 3rd, Early Moth at Seabrook on the 12th and Dotted Border at Hythe and Seabrook on the 21st.



Acleris cristana at Seabrook (Paul Howe)



Pretty Chalk Carpet at Folkestone Warren (Brad Foster)



Spring Usher at Cheriton (Brian Harper)



Early Moth at Seabrook (Paul Howe)

The first butterflies of the year made an appearance in February, with a Small Tortoiseshell at Lypne on the 13th and a Brimstone at Folkestone Warren on the 19th.